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*Improvisations*

*Stanley Kimmel*

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*Stanley Kimmel*

*Author*

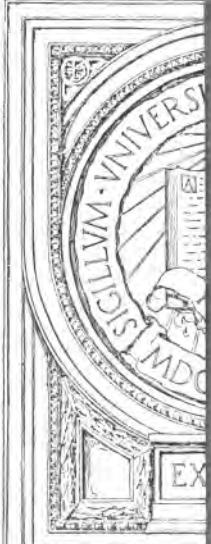
*"SOUVENIRS," &c.*



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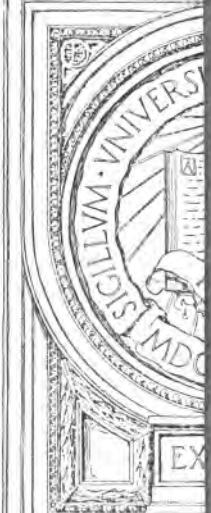
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"*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes  
Emollit mores, nec sinunt esse feros.*"  
—Ovid.

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### VESPERA

Evening comes and softly floats  
The music of a summer's breeze,  
And mingles with Apollo's lyre  
The sighing of the laurel trees.  
On yonder lake the gleaming stars  
Have kissed the tiring waves to sleep,  
And o'er the far off stretching plain  
Golden moon-beams, silent, creep.

Olympus harps again are stilled,  
The song is dead, the feast is o'er,  
Fair Hebe holds an empty cup,  
And nectar spots the golden floor.

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### NOCTIS SILENTIUM

The day lies buried 'neath a wintry sky,  
In cloaks of silence, once vermillion,  
Through misty shreds of fading verdant  
light,

Selene bathes white-limbed Endymion.  
Beside a flaming shield of golden mould,  
The ancient Clio grasps a withered quill,  
Impatiently, with quivering hand, she

scrawls,

Atropos softly breathes, "Be still, be still."  
O where is she of Ilion's fallen towers,  
Or Caesar with his treasured wealth and  
fame,

And he who roamed a fabled, mystic sea,  
That liberty might know a sweeter name—  
Are they but as the dust of Fortune's day,  
When she strode boldly through archaic  
lands

And wedded deathless Immortality,  
Then left him with her jewels in his  
hands?

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## LIMON!

Limon! Limon! What thrill thou gavest  
me  
When first I looked upon thy silent  
throng,  
When all of life lay dreaming in the calm,  
And night winds mingled with a  
boatman's song.  
Where once the greedy hand of pirate  
Spain  
Snatched from thy birth-right a  
dominion's gold,  
Then placed upon the soil a tyrant claw,  
And for some tinsel god, thy franchise  
sold.  
What land can breath the air republican  
Whose State kneels low before a papist,  
crowned?  
Is freedom but a gift of regal power,  
Must Liberty in scarlet robes be bound?  
Where are the warriors of thy classic  
days  
Who freed thee when thou wert a noble  
slave?  
Arise! Behold! The lord of yesteryears  
Who came as knight remains as royal  
knav!

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### MELPOMENE

(To Sarah Truax)

Amid the sparkling flood of silver sand,  
Where sleeps the desert wrapped in  
vestal beams,  
Thou art the goddess of the opal streams  
That fall from heaven to this torrid  
land.  
Like some strange cadence of a saraband  
The droning winds chant their nomadic  
themes  
O'er crouching tents where each bronze  
Arab dreams  
Of Cassim's gold and nights in  
Samarkand.

Who knows, save he whose prison soul  
has bled,  
The lonely anguish of these Trappist  
walls,  
Or had companionship with living dead  
Who jeer the day and chide the night  
yet dread  
The coming hour when o'er their serfdom  
falls  
The requiem they hear in cloistral halls.

(Garden of Allah)

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### OLD MEN

Old men always sit alone,  
In groups of twos or threes or more,  
Like rusted bolts held feebly fast  
Upon some queer, old fashioned door,  
Whose withered eyes have often mocked  
The passing paupers and the kings,  
And others strolling by that way,  
Ladies of the street and things.  
They have seen all, the good and bad,  
Known Love and pale, green lipped  
Despair;  
Yet still they sit with wrinkled eyes,  
And like the dead they stare and stare.

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## LAW

A child of Custom whom all tyrants  
fear,  
A gift divine if reason guides thy way,  
But tread not purple roads of power by day,  
Nor steal with soulless step into the night  
Where Pity gropes unpitied in the sight  
Of those gold-kings who would by  
pillage live,  
Lest thou become a red-eyed fugitive  
When thou the voice of Anarchy doth  
hear.

Where Lust and Greed have built a  
vulture throne  
The Christ of Justice kneels with  
bleeding head,  
And Kindness is a stranger in that land  
Where Poverty with Crime walks hand  
in hand;  
For such my native soil doth hold her  
dead—  
Is this mine heritage of Washington?

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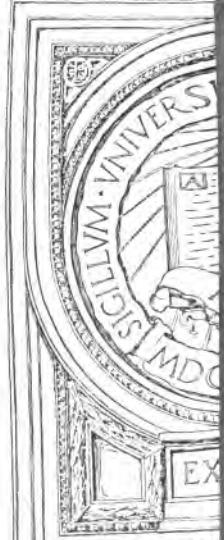
# *Melancholia*

*Movements from a Symphony*

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### ADAGIO

In the park so melancholy  
The sad pines their torches bear,  
Towering in the silence, holy,  
Cleave the grey, nocturnal air.

Would it were some vale fantastic  
Where my soul could meet thine own,  
And with purple song chromatic  
Dance the hours as roses blown.

Perfumes linger after greeting,  
(Once I saw thee weep, and know)  
Saw the moon-light quickly fleeting  
In the dawn's first lustrous glow.

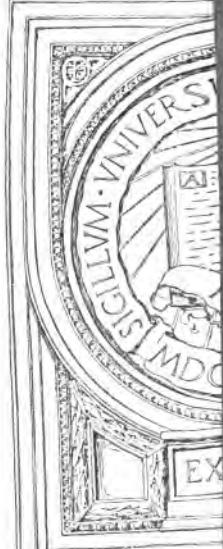
### L'ENVOI

As tones prolonged are softly swept  
By jewelled hands on ivory keys,  
You passed and only angels wept,  
And cold winds stirred the leafless  
trees.

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## ANDANTE

(Quai des Augustines)

The night is green, monotonous,  
And rain engulfs the vendor's mart,  
It bathes my soul in deepest gloom,  
Will not from out my soul depart.

The street lamps glitter dolefully,  
Throughout the space of empty halls  
Grim phantoms dance half-wittingly,  
As eunuchs dance at secret baits.

Now sleeps the river with its fears  
Mist hidden by the night's strange  
pall,  
Nor hears the weird, impassioned plaint  
Of rain and tears upon the wall;

Hears not the sobbing of the rain  
Or tears upon the cold, grey wall.

Like dusky porcelains, spectral forms  
Strut up and down the haunted mall;  
They mock the little things they pass,  
The rain and tears which sob and fall.

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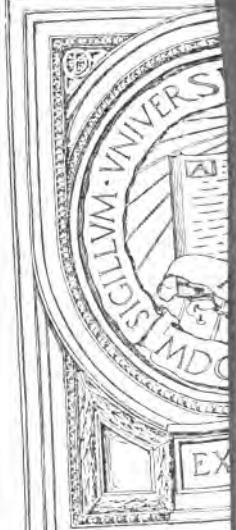
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*Pieces from a Boudoir  
Suite*

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I

Limbs so pure and white,  
What wonderful delight  
The pallor of the sheet discloses;  
Wrapped in fragile hair  
They have that virgin air  
Of snow and roses.

Have the muses seen  
Pygmalion and his queen—  
Known the marble passion of her eyes?  
Swiftly the false moon,  
Dances about the room,  
Naked, over-wise.

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IV

Evening fades and the moon's light  
Falls like some soft, blue brocade;  
O'er a balcony of Jade  
Steal the shadows in their flight.

Soul of fastly fleeting dreams,  
Like the night whose silver song  
Wanes as perfumed silks among  
Slender, luring, sapphire beams.

All the grace of woman-kind,  
Innocence, quite like a child,  
Mirrored in a voice as mild,  
Gay as laughing summer wind.

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*Queries*  
TWO SONGS

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### MORNING SADNESS

Why am I thus with sorrow wed,  
Who scarce did know sweet childhood's  
guest,

Where are the singing meadow larks  
With carols of their morning quest;

Why do the flowers droop their heads  
Upon the shadowed garden wall,  
Why is the music soft and sad  
From out the sparkling water-fall?

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### WHENCE COMES THIS SONG

Whence comes this song so golden  
In the dark and silent night,  
Born from my soul's great sadness  
Carried on by fancy's flight;

Where go these words of sorrow  
Through the ages yet unbound,  
Will they, like wintry flowers,  
Fall on barren, frozen ground?

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### PENOMBRA

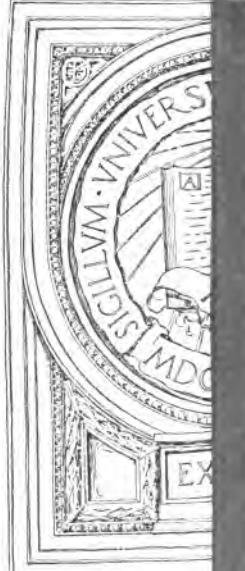
Before the day her sleepy eyes have  
closed  
And Somnus sweeps her into shadowed  
dreams,  
Let music float upon the silenced air  
In one great symphony of dulcet themes;  
Let all the Earth resound in eulogy,  
As Sappho sings of some famed hero's  
might,  
Till Phoebus drops his gems of aureate  
And lifeless falls into the arms of Night.

Pale Sleep, with robes of scented  
asphodels,  
Glides swiftly on past mystic twilight  
folds;  
And steals into the forest's dim recess  
Where he can woo the gaudy marigolds;  
The stars peer out with cold and jealous  
eyes  
Upon a timid faun who doth forsake  
Her lily-bed that she may muse beside  
The moon's proud image mirrored in  
the lake.

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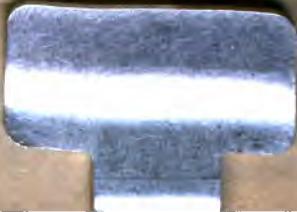
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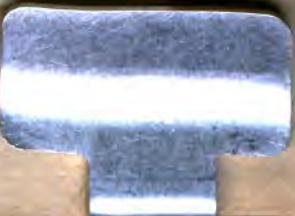
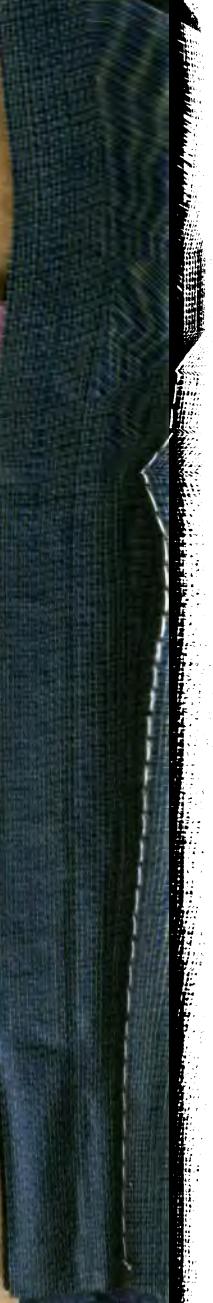
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